

THE CATHOLIC PRESBYTERIAN.

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DEAN STANLEY'S LATEST VIEWS.*

IT is inevitable that an American writer discussing contemporary persons or events in Britain should appear as awkward and inadequately informed to Englishmen and Scotchmen, as one of themselves appears to us Americans, when discussing subjects native to this side of the Atlantic. A considerable observation of such instances prompts me to assure the readers of *The Catholic Presbyterian* that I pretend only to bear witness as to the appearance which the persons and things treated of present at this distance to real, though Catholic, Presbyterians in America.

It is an event worthy of notice, and probably of great consequence, that at the very time at which the Anglican party in the English and American Episcopal Churches appear to be increasing in influence as well as in exclusiveness and in sacerdotal assumption, such works as the following should emanate from the most eminent scholars of their communion:—"Catholic Thoughts on the Church of Christ, and the Church of England," by the late Frederick Myers; "The Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament," by the Rev. S. A. Jacob, D.D., late Head-Master of Christ's Hospital; "The Organisation of the Early Christian Church, Bampton Lecture for 1881," by the Rev. Vice-Principal Hatch; the dissertation "On the Ministry," appended to his Commentary on Philippians, by the Right Rev. Bishop Lightfoot; and last, the volume by the late Dean Stanley, whose title stands below. All these, while differing widely in method, motive, and spirit, yet agree substantially in demonstrating from the idea and design of the Church, from the Scriptures, and from the literary and monumental vestiges of the early Christians, that no form of organisation can be essential to the validity, or even to the efficiency, of the Church of Christ; that the Christian ministry is not a priesthood; that the apostolic office has

* Christian Institutions: Essays on Ecclesiastical Subjects, by Arthur Penhryn Stanley, D.D., Dean of Westminster. London: John Murray. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1881.

[CATHOLIC PRESBYTERIAN, March, 1882.]

belief in the historical character of the records of our Faith. If that is once destroyed, it is not likely that either church or chapel will long continue in a satisfactory condition.

JOHN GIBB.

DENOMINATIONAL THOUGHT : ITS PUBLICATION AND PRESERVATION.

RELIGIOUS denominations are expensive luxuries. To live and hold its own among eagerly-competing rivals, each denomination must organise and maintain a whole family of agencies—boards of missions, of education, of Church erection, &c. Each one must also send and support missionaries in heathen lands. All this will require no inconsiderable number of men—men, too, of talent and education—that the denominational machinery may be worked with intelligence and efficiency. And this requires no small amount of money. Could several of these denominations come to see eye to eye, and thus be led to combine their great evangelistic agencies, a most effective concentration of thought, talent, and pecuniary contribution would be secured, and with it an annual saving of many tens of thousands of pounds sterling, which might be applied to the furthering of the work of the Church among men.

If, then, there be a body of Christians that is not differentiated from all others by certain controlling, if not vital, principles of doctrine, organisation, or views of duty, that body has no right to a separate existence. Has the Presbyterian body such right to distinct individual existence? Is it in possession and profession of any great, distinctive principles which, in its own deep, unwavering convictions demand assertion, exhibition, and commendation to the judgment, the heart, the conscience of mankind: which principles and convictions make it imperative upon its members, at whatever cost, at whatever hazard, to assert, maintain, and propagate them, and likewise, in their view, promise ultimate victory over all opposing systems? That such has ever been the conviction of Presbyterians as to the general principles of their system has been evinced in every way by which confession can be made, and under every condition of danger, torture, and death that persecution ever devised.

Furthermore, the vital peculiarities of a given denomination of Christians will not merely appear in its form of government, in its confession of faith, in its mode of conducting evangelistic work, but will gravely affect and modify its mode of setting forth the doctrines of grace in the pulpit and through the press. The doctrinal views of a denomination are the result of its peculiar interpretation of the Word

CATHOLIC PRESBYTERIAN, March, 1882.]

of God, and such interpretation will colour its whole religious life. No consistent Arminian can present the Bible appeal to the lost sinner in the style and terms of the consistent Calvinist. And Calvinist and Arminian are very wide apart in their views as to the nature of the change effected in the new birth, and as to the processes, methods, and measure of sanctification approved by the Word of God, and enjoined upon man.

This being the case, it is incumbent upon a Presbyterian body to see to it not only that her principles of doctrine, polity, and religious life be proclaimed from the pulpit and taught in her catechisms, but that they be also embodied in literary forms, and, as far as may be, thrust before the eyes of men; to see to it that the story of her endurance, aggressions, defence, triumphs in the wastes of heathendom, revival triumphs in nominally Christian lands, be put on record and published abroad; and also that records of all this be gathered and garnered for the instruction and inspiration of the generations following.

Acting upon these views the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, many years ago, organised a "Board of Publication," for the purpose of reproducing the best Presbyterian thought of by-gone days, and of securing and putting into permanent form the current doctrinal, ecclesiastical, apologetic, awakening, and devotional utterances of her children.

In the year 1838, just after the memorable division of the Church, that branch then styled the "Old School" adopted as its own a society previously organised by the Synod of Philadelphia, and at its meeting in the following year, modified the structure of this society, and gave to it the title it now bears, "The Board of Publication." The design of the Board was, the publication of "approved works in support of the great principles of the Reformation, as exhibited in the doctrines and order of the Presbyterian Church, and whatever else the Assembly may direct, which, permanent or periodical, are adapted to promote sound learning and true religion."

To carry into effect this scheme, some forty thousand dollars were collected and placed in the hands of a board of trustees, to be managed in accordance with the objects of the Institution. Up to the time of the reunion in 1870, the sum with which the board had begun its work had increased to nearly three hundred thousand dollars, this amount representing mainly real estate and stock on hand. At the time of the reunion, the other branch also possessed a "Publication Committee," with a property valued at about one hundred and twenty thousand dollars. At the present time the combined capital is about four hundred and seventy thousand dollars. This sum represents a fine, spacious edifice in the heart of the city of Philadelphia, with commodious rooms occupied by other boards and agencies of the Church, and a large assembly-room for meetings of Presbytery, meetings of the Ministerial Association, and other religious meetings. Many members of the Second

[CATHOLIC PRESBYTERIAN, March, 1882.]

Presbyterian Council held in Philadelphia, who availed themselves of the facilities afforded them within its walls, and who were present at the reception tendered them by the Board, saw with their own eyes the dimensions and appointments of this edifice, and will not need to be told that it is worthy of the Church which has given and which sustains it.

This Board of Publication consists of forty-eight members, one-half of them ministers, the other half ruling elders, elected by the General Assembly to serve for three years, the terms of one-third of them ending with each year. At the first meeting of the Board after the adjournment of the Assembly, it elects a president and three vice-presidents, and divides itself into committees, to each of which is assigned some special department of service. These committees meet as often as needful, and report their proceedings to the Board at its monthly meetings, when the course of each is approved or disapproved, according to the judgment of the Board in the case.

From the beginning, the Board has made it a law that all bills against it be paid once a month. As a result, no financial crisis, however sore or far-reaching in its effects, has ever caused the Board a moment's embarrassment. It has suffered no losses through misconduct on the part of its officers; and the amount of losses through bad debts has been merely nominal.

The following shows the range of its publications, and the number of works under each—on Presbyterianism, 44; on Missions, 51; on the Lord's Supper, 16; on Prayer, 34; on the Sabbath, 24; on the Sabbath School, 18; on Baptism, 33; on Temperance, 35; on Romanism, 63; on Ruling Elders, 4; on Giving, 25; on Advice to Inquirers, 69; on Sanctification, 6; on Amusements, 16, &c.

Early in the history of the Board, it was found that the *mere publication* of books, and offering them for sale at the counter, came far short of what was both desirable and practicable. The great problem was to *get into the families* of the Church the literature that should feed and nourish denominational life; to *get into the hands* of saint and sinner the reading matter adapted to their several frames of mind. To this end it was not enough that the books of the Board be offered for sale at the book stores. Multitudes, and those in deepest need of the spiritual food stored up in those pages, would never so much as know of their existence. Hence another department was added—"the Missionary Department." Godly men, zealous for the cause of the Master, and for the salvation of souls, are selected by the Presbyteries within whose bounds they are to labour, and by them recommended to the Board to be commissioned for their work. Some of them are supported by particular Churches; some by even a single benevolent man. Some support themselves by the gains they make upon their sales; but most of them receive a small salary, and an additional sum for travelling expenses.

CATHOLIC PRESBYTERIAN, March, 1882.]

The funds for the support of this department are provided by annual collections in the churches, and by appropriations from the Business Department of a portion of the gains not needed for the oncarrying and enlargement of its work.

The missionaries of the Board go from house to house, offer its publications, call attention to their contents, sell them when they can, but where poverty or sometimes indifference forbids sale, bestow the book or tract as a gift, converse on the subject of religious duty, and, where practicable, pray with the household, and thus sow far and wide the seed of the kingdom. In this way books calculated to arrest the attention of the careless, to produce or deepen religious conviction, and to nourish the life of God in the soul are widely scattered. Books, for example, like Dr. Archibald Alexander's "Religious Experience," full, from cover to cover, of the very marrow of practical religion, are to-day in thousands of homes simply because the missionary brought them to the door and called attention to their character. The same is true of books eloquent and mighty in their appeals to the unconverted; and books which the thoughtless worldling would never think of sending for, thus reach his hand and may lead him to Christ. Thus during the year 1880, over and above the books disseminated through the book stores, an additional number of more than 96,000 volumes, besides over four and a-half millions of pages of tracts, were placed by the missionaries in the families of this land.

And while this work has proved of priceless value in places where a stated pastor is unknown, and to which the home missionary rarely if ever comes, very many pastors testify to the exceeding value of the books of the Board in their families in deepening spiritual interest at the time of religious awakenings, feeding the piety of believers, and making it more intelligent and stable.

Of particular works put into the hands of the people by the Board, the following are examples:—26,000 copies of Dr. Archibald Alexander's "Way of Salvation," 900 copies of the "Life of Knox," 15,000 of Matthews' "Divine Purpose," 153,000 "Confession of Faith," 38,000 Dr. Alexander's "Religious Experience," 9500 Dickinson's "Five Points," 7500 Calvin's "Institutes," 18,000 Boston's "Four-fold State," 19,500 Fisher's "Catechism," 19,500 "Life of Robert Murray M'Cheyne," 53,000 Fairchild's "Great Supper," 52,000 Alexander's "Evidences," 2,120,000 "Shorter Catechism," &c. These, be it noted, are so many copies of religious works disseminated *in addition* to all that have emanated from all other sources. As the result of the operations of this Board, there must be millions of these volumes now in the families of the land. And that even books that are supposed to be largely superseded by modern taste are yet read and appreciated, is evidenced by the curious fact that a letter from a western State, some time since, reached the publication house in Chestnut Street, thus addressed:—

[CATHOLIC PRESBYTERIAN, March, 1882.]

"MR. THOMAS BOSTON,—Dear Sir,—I have been reading with great pleasure and profit your excellent work entitled the "Four-fold State." Please inform me at what price I can obtain fifty copies for distribution. When do you expect to publish another volume?"

When the Civil War broke out in our country, a very large number of the books and tracts of the Board were in the hands of its agents in the South. All these were made over to those in whose hands they were for distribution among the Confederate armies. Vast numbers of prisoners of war, both Northern and Southern, were visited, conversed with, prayed with, and presented with the Word of Life, as found in the publications of the Board. Of the "Soldier's Pocket-Book," a small volume, rich with Gospel matter in prose and simple song, over three hundred thousand copies were given to soldiers.

Perhaps no work of the Board is more important than that which it does for the children. They who teach the child need care little who seeks to control the adult. In this day of universal and insatiable reading, and at a time when the land is flooded with publications of every description for children, and when the Sabbath-school lesson is printed and scattered in so many forms, the Church that does not take care of its children is lost. Books find their way into Sabbath-school libraries that are unfit to be read by children even on the week day. From the press of the Presbyterian Board there issues a constant stream of publications, not only unexceptionable in matter, but instinct with Gospel truths; biographies, books of history, of natural history, all written by authors who breathe through them the spirit of the Gospel. Lesson papers also, careful expositions of each Sabbath lesson; papers full of illustrative facts issued in a style to attract, and written in a style to interest the young, are poured forth in rich profusion. The following will show a portion of the work done in this department. During the year 1880 the Board sent abroad, of "The Westminster Teacher," 290,000 copies; of the "Westminster Lesson Leaf," nearly three million copies; of the "Westminster Quarterly," 286,000 copies; of the "Westminster Primary Lesson Leaf," 93,000 copies; of the "German Lesson Leaf," 39,000 copies. All these are carefully-prepared expositions of the Sabbath-school lessons for pupils of different ages. The Board also publishes *The Sabbath-school Visitor*, a weekly illustrated paper for children; *The Sunbeam*, another illustrated paper for younger children; and yet another, *Forward*, for the older ones. The whole number of these issues during the last year exceeded six millions, and the whole number of copies of periodicals very nearly ten millions. And the circulation of these periodical publications is rapidly increasing.

They who appreciate the power of the printed page, who have faith in the power of the truth of God as set before the eye, will need no assurance that the issues of this Board of Publication scattered through the homes of the land tell forcibly on the mind, heart, and character of the people; and they who are acquainted with the deluge of bad

CATHOLIC PRESBYTERIAN, March, 1882.]

literature that overspreads the country will thank God for an agency that goes so far in furnishing an antidote for this poison.

PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

While various bodies of Presbyterians in the United States have established Boards of Publication, all of them have united in measures for gathering and housing in secure shelter the memorials, literary and other, of the progress of Presbyterianism along the highways of time. The origination of the Presbyterian Historical Society was due to the intelligence, zeal, and liberality of one man, Mr. Samuel Agnew, for many years a ruling elder in the Second Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia. Being a man of means, Mr. Agnew for many years eagerly laid hands upon any choice work that came under his notice and within his reach, bearing upon the subject upon which his heart was set. If he saw advertisement of a library sale in New York, Boston, Cleveland, or Cincinnati, he at once took rail for the spot, and secured, often at large cost, the object he desired. Not unfrequently, to obtain one desiderated volume, he would purchase the whole package in which it lay hidden. Should a sale be advertised in London, Edinburgh, or Glasgow, Mr. Agnew, through his agent, who was always under instruction, made sure for his collection of any coveted work.

At length, at his instance, a Society was formed, a board of trustees elected, a charter of incorporation obtained, the treasures in his possession passed over to their custody, and the interest of Presbyterians throughout the land awakened in the enterprise. The supreme judicatories of all the Presbyterian bodies in the country, North and South, have again and again commended this library to the attention and liberality of the people. The result is a collection of about twelve thousand volumes, of some of which no duplicates exist; about thirty-five thousand pamphlets, magazines, and reviews; between three hundred and four hundred volumes of religious newspapers; many rare manuscripts, portraits of distinguished ministers and ruling elders, pictures of church edifices, some of them hallowed by scenes of revival-awakening in other days, and other precious memorials of bygone times. In anticipation of the centennial year, an effort was made to secure the preaching and remission to the Society of historical sermons from as many ministers as possible, and somewhere near a thousand histories of individual churches in every part of the land came to the library. And as not unfrequently the history of a church in this country is to a great extent the history of the community with which it grew up, the amount of general historical matter embraced in these sermons is very large and very valuable. Donations to this collection reach the Society from all parts of the world, even from far-off China. Very valuable gifts have been received from the Rev. John M'Naughton of Belfast, Ireland.

For many years these precious treasures were stored here and there

in lofts and cellars, where they were every hour exposed to injury from various causes, to loss by theft and destruction by fire. At last money was raised, largely through the personal, self-denying efforts of the venerable George W. Musgrave, D.D., and a fire-proof building erected at a central point in the city of Philadelphia, where the collection is as secure as man can make it. The Society is now in condition to receive and keep in safety the records of churches and church judicatories, and any other historic material of value. In past years, records and documents of incalculable worth have been irretrievably lost for want of some secure place of deposit.

The board of trustees meet every month, and push forward measures for the furthering of the work in hand. Occasional lectures are delivered before the Society by distinguished men in the Church, and thus much valuable matter is obtained. Among those who have favoured the Society in this way have been Albert Barnes, Dr. Charles Hodge, Professor Archibald Alexander Hodge, Dr. John Hall, Dr. S. Irenaus Prime, and Professor James C. Moffat. When the full scheme of the Society shall be realized, it will have not only the library and museum, but an endowment fund that will enable it to secure regular courses of lectures and to add constantly to its collection, which is destined to become one of the largest and most valuable in the country.

Here the toiling historian will find ready to his hand the material he needs with which to instruct the Church, stimulate its zeal, and fire the enthusiasm of Presbyterians in the propagation of their principles and in serving their Divine Master.

W. P. BREED.

ALEXANDER COMRIE : HIS CONFLICT IN HOLLAND.

(See *The Catholic Presbyterian*, January, page 20.)

THE direct influence exerted by Comrie through his local ministry upon the Church of Holland in his own time, however far-spreading, was but insignificant compared with the mighty power exercised by his writings over the mass of the Dutch Reformed people after his death, and down to the present. His opponents are now all forgotten ; their very names are unknown to our people ; but his own books are still reprinted, and are read over and over again. Schultens, Van den Os, Alberti, and in a sense even Jan van den Honert are now mere technical figures, known only to scholars and students of Church history, but Comrie continues to be a living person, whose staunch spirit still strengthens the weak, and whose clear expositions of the way by grace to glory continue to be welcomed by rich and poor. This he is, owing to three facts,—First, to the fact that while his adversaries by-and-by fell under the influence of rationalism, he and his *fidus Achates*, Nicolas